DAILY EVENING BULLETIN.

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That Comic Mask.

[Wilson Barret.]

Come up stairs, and on the stage Rehearsal is in full swing, and all are working with a will, for there is but one heart, one mind in this little band, bound together by an art-companionship of years. Traveling together month after month, year after year, they are for the most part earnest, thoughtful and determined to succeed.

The little theatre is like a human hive. There in the corner are the light comedian and the walking lady trying over the "trips," or dances, with which, as harlequin and columbine, they are to entrance the souls of the little ones on Boxing Night.

The soubrette (Mrs. Gregory Buffin) is at the back of the stage with some two dozen children, putting them through a series of evolutions—announced on the bill as "A Grand Juvenive Ballet! Performed entirely by Natives of Holydace." There is the popular low comedian, who is to play clown, looking anxiously after his scanty array of properties, for, as usual, the property man has been up night and day working at the grand processions, etc., and there has been no time to look after the harlequinade; so Gregory Buffin grumbles under his breath, and daubs away at his hot poker and his string of sausages, giving every now and then a look of encouragement at little Mrs. Gregory B., driven almost to despair by the untractible nature of the material which forms her whole corps de ballet. The scene-painter is slap dashing at the realms of delight, and little particles of Dutch metal are floating in the air. The band is banging away at the triumphal march, and there is hammering, hammering everywhere—in the pit, in the boxes, under the stage, over the stage, and on the stage, for space is limited in the Theater Royal, Holydace, and time (considering the work to be done before Boxing Night) equally so; both must be economized.

The manager—"the gov'nor" as the company call him—is at the front of the stage with eyes and ears everywhere.

"A little quicker, and more spirit!" (this to the band). "Forte with that cornet! Is that drum playing, or is it not?"

"Where is your wand, Miss Gauzeikin?"

"That can't be right. Wood does not, and never did, rhyme with love. What is the line, prompter? Of course."

"Take that child away from that gluepot."

"Joe! Go up to my room and bring me down some green foil, and I will dodge up this demon's head."

"Eh! Certainly you can wear pink tights if you like them better."

"No, little one, I have not got your shoes. Ask Mrs. Wraggs for them."

"That's wrong; try that song again. Yes, all through! Do let us get it right. Tom, have you finished that dummy baby yet?"

"What on earth is this? Bird of Paradise, indeed! Looks like a boiled owl; do lengthen the tail, and dash a little color into it. I didn't ask for a scarecrow."

"Ladies, ladies! Do leave off laughing and talking, and save your voices for your songs. If you would but be as loud on the stage as you are off!"

"Don't bother any more over that dance, Miss Emmie; you must be tired out, and it is sure to go."

"What is it? Eh? How can I see a stranger in the middle of this muddle? Looks hard up! Of course. Well, bring him on the stage, I'll try to snatch a moment for him." And on "the guv'nor" goes.

Turning round the corner of the wings a pale, wan face is peering, a pair of brown, wistful eyes gaze anxiously on the guv'nor. Their owner waits to be called, but in the whirl of thinking for everybody the guv'nor has forgotten the man he has sent for, till presently his eye lights on the strange, woe-begone face.

"Who's that? Oh, of course, ask him to come here."

A figure in seedy black limps painfully forward; a man, and a gentleman, the guv'nor thinks, for his quick eyes (trick eyes, the company call them; they declare he sees before, behind, and on every side of him) take in the whole of the man's character at a glance.

A threadbare coat is held by a cold blue hand tremblingly round the shirtless throat, while the other hand lifts cautiously a battered hat as he approaches; the boots, from which the snow is thawing with the heat of the footlights, are old and worn—one hole to let the water in, another to let it out. And the face—"Poor fellow!" thinks the guv'nor. "Who and what are you? No drink there; only poverty, misery, and hopeless friendlessness. "What is it?"

"Mr. ——, I believe?" The question is asked with a hollow though still musical voice, with a trained, cultivated accent.

"I am sorry to intrude upon you at a time like this, but I thought it just possible that there might be a small part still unfilled, or if not, that there might be a chance for me even as a super."

The soul of the man seems to look out hungrily from the large brown eyes, and the guv'nor feels a small lump in his throat as he watches the sorrow of the face, and the look of yearning hunger—hunger for food, hunger for friendship, companionship and love.

The man is starving, he thinks, as he asks: "Do you belong to Holydace?"

"No, sir; I have walked to-day from Barafield, twelve miles away."

"What is your name?"

"Henry Gray."

"Assumed," thinks the guv'nor, kindly refraining from further questioning, and with a lie (for which forgive him, reader), he says: "Yes, there is a small part in—let me see—the sixth scene, which I shall be glad to give you. Of course, the salary is small, but everything will be found for you, and it may suit you till something better turns up."

The poor wan face quivers, and tears are in the quiet brown eyes. "Oh, thank you, sir. I shall never forget your kind"—

Rather hurriedly the guv'nor breaks in with—

"Treasury was held this morning, but here is half a week's salary in advance. Go and get a lodging and something to eat; and be back in an hour, and I will rehearse you in the part. Excuse me now."

The cold trembling hand grasps the money, and the poor colorless lips move noiselessly as Mr. Gray raises his hat and departs.

The guv'nor sits at the prompt table, and with a quick inward question of "Where can I put him?" he pulls out a pencil, bites it, and scribbles off a few lines of doggerel, hands it to the prompter to copy into the manuscript of the pantomime, and calls for the property man.

"Tom! Where's that comic mask—that one with the wide laughing mouth? Yes, that's it."

What a mask! One of Dyk-Wyn-Ken's funniest, The whole face is one huge, droll, uncontrollable laugh.

The rehearsal proceeds, and in less than half an hour Mr. Gray returns. He has had a meal, and there is a look of thankfulness if not content on his face. The prompter hands him the part and asks him to try on the mask. He does so, and the effect is queer, odd painful—the thin, starved figure, the poor cold hands, the threadbare clothes, and the jolly, well-fed, uproariously laughing, exaggerated head, under the weight of which the man almost staggers in his weakness.

On goes the rehearsals. One by one "the boys" go up to and speak to the stranger. Actors are quick to read the signs of trouble, and by the time Mr. Gray is called for his scene they have made him feel to a certain extent one of themselves, and are cracking jokes for his amusement, an attention which he accepts gracefully, and joins in with quietly. Some comic music is played, and Mr. Gray is called upon to deliver the result of the guv'nor's "inspiration," which has produced the following:

Our King is coming; greet him a cheer;
Let him see naught but pleasure dwelleth here;
Sing, shout, and dance—to look your jolliest try, do,
Laugh till your sides ache—enjoy yourselves as I do.

He speaks his lines feebly through the mask, and asks if he can be of any further assistance.

"No, thank you," says the guv'nor, thinking to himself, "you have as much to do as your strength can compass. You can go." Still Mr. Gray lingers, the band is playing, the footlights are blazing. Within the theatre there is light, life, companionship; without, darkness, the snow, and loneliness, and so he lingers until almost the last; and as he goes, one of the boys says:

"Give us a call to-morrow, laddie. It's Christmas day, and we'll have a glass and a smoke together. That's my address."

Mr. Gray grasps the offered hand gratefully, and says, "Thank Heaven, I am among friends at last!" With another bow of thanks to the guv'nor, he is gone.

Boxing night has come, and the theatre Royal, Holydace, is packed from floor to ceiling with an excited, expectant, holiday audience—working folk, most of them—rough, honest, kindly, and enthusiastic. Several of the company are favorites, and are received heartily. All goes swimmingly. The rehearsals have been carefully conducted. The guv'nor knows fully the extent of his resources, and has not gone one step beyond them. All right up to the sixth scene, in which Mr. Gray is to appear. The poor fellow in his anxiety was dressed before the rising of the curtain, trying to help when and where he could. But now he is leaning against the wings, looking ghastly pale, with large blue circles under his eyes, and that comic mask is at his feet, grinning at his weakness. With an evident effort he pulls himself together as his cue comes, and with a struggle hoists the mask over his head and totters on to the stage. The mask provokes a roar of laughter, which Gray does not hear, for there is a singing in his ears and a mist before his eyes. He staggers, struggles to speak, and falls. Another roar of laughter from the audience, who accept the fall as part of the fun, and no wonder, for that comic mask is still laughing its hardest, and they can't see the death-stricken face beneath it. The man is supporting himself with one hand on the stage, and with the other he is vainly trying to lift the mask, which is now almost stifling him. He is trembling violently, and the audience still laugh, for with that comic mask the trembling heightens the ludicrous effect, and the whole figure seems to be shaking with merriment. The guv'nor knows better, and calls to Gregory Buffin:

"Quick, Greg., carry that poor fellow off the stage; he is fainting."

Gregory bounds on with a gag, tenderly lifts up the fallen man, and brings him to the wings; the guv'nor pulls off the mask and carries him to a dressing-room.

"Send for some brandy and a cab; get him to his logings, and put him in a warm bed; get a doctor, and let him have anything he wants," says the guv'nor. Poor Gray is carried to his humble lodging, where the warm-hearted Yorkshire matron receives him with "Eh, lad, but I thowt tha' wert wrong to go out. Come in, do; get him 'i bed, while I light th' fire. Get him some hot gruel."

Poor Gray is carried to the bedroom muttering half unconsciously that he "is better, and is sure to be all right for to-morrow night."

"Was the guv'nor very angry at the mess he had made of his part?" And then he begins to wander, and repeats the doggerel dreamily.

"Sing, shout and dance, to look your jolliest, try, do,
Laugh till your sides ache, enjoy yourself as I do."

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At the theatre, on goes the pantomime with roar after roar till the curtain falls, when some of "the boys" dress hurriedly, and go to Gray's lodgings to inquire after, and, if necessary, to sit up with him. But the doctor has been and has given orders that no one is to see him. Then they "will come round in the morning." But, by the morning, Gray, who has been delirious all night, has been taken by the doctor's orders to the hospital, where "the boys" are not allowed to see him.

For three days the poor fellow tosses in wild delirium; at times they have to hold him down. He "will go on for his part," he raves. And with wearisome monotony of intonation he repeats the lines:

"Sing, shout, and dance, to look your jolliest try, do,
Laugh till your sides ache, enjoy yourself as I do!"

Over and over again the jingle is repeated, and every now and then there is a tender, plaintive call for "Gracie."

Who was she? Who is she? Is she living still? What was the link that bound the two together? What was the blow that snapped the link asunder, and sent this poor waif to wander over the earth homeless and alone?

On the third evening (as they are lighting the footlights at the theatre) a calm comes over poor Gray at the hospital; he has been still for a time, and the nurse who is watching him sees the large brown eyes unclose and look round feebly, wonderingly. "Where am I?" asks Gray. Kindly the nurse tells him of his illness. "I shall lose my engagement," he moans.

"No, no, the guv'nor has sent word that you are not to worry. Your salary will be paid all the same, and he and all the company sent their best wishes for your recovery, and for a happy New Year."

"Thank God, there's somebody thinking of me," comes with a sob in a whisper from the bed, and the poor face, on which the death-dew is gathering, is turned slowly to the wall. Quite quiet and still he lies; no more tossing, no more muttering. "He sleeps at last," thinks the nurse, and she leaves him for a time. When she returns he has not moved. She looks closer. He is dead. At the theatre they have just reached scene sixth of the pantomime, but Gray's part is cut out.

Gray is gone. Whither? May we hope that he is "among friends at last?"

New Year's morn, and the sun is shining, shining gaily on the frozen snow; and on the frozen branches the frost beads glisten like myriads of diamonds in its bright clear rays. Over the town the sun is shining over the factories, whose tall chimneys seem to be vomiting their blackest smoke in vain endeavors to cloud his brightness; over the church and over the theatre it gleams with most impartial splendor; over God's Acre, on the hillside yonder, the sun is shining, making it look less black and cold, preparing, it seemed, a welcome to the new comer, who was soon to finish his earthly pilgrimage in the six feet of ground the company clubbed together to buy for the stranger. Slowly up the hill a procession is toiling, while the passing-bell booms out its monotonous "Come!" "Come!" "Come!" Up the hill, and into the little chapel the company gather. All are there; the harlequin, the columbine, the pantaloon, from the guv'nor to the call-boy, all are there, listening to the voice of the preacher.

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord."

Firmly as the first words are uttered, the voice is wavering and broken before he finishes, and his eyes, and those of all present, are dimmed with tear.

Out of the chapel and on to the hillside covered with the glistening snow. There is a fresh track of footsteps yonder, and that track is followed by the little band of mourners till they reach the new-made grave. Round it all reverently kneel with uncovered heads. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," almost sobs the priest, for he knows all that is known of the wanderer, and the story—meagre though it is—has touched him deeply, kind hands drop winter flowers upon the coffin; long, lingering looks are given at the plain name plate and its inscription—"Henry Gray, died December 29, 187—," and then slowly all descend the hill, talking quietly and wondering deeply over the history of the dear brother departed, whose body they had committed unto the ground. Who was he? Whence came he? They never knew. Only a packet of letters tied with a faded ribbon, written in a woman's hand, undated and without address, signed simply "Gracie," was found upon him and was buried with him. Who was he? Nobody knew. Nobody cared. Except the players and the priest.

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The guv'ner went sadly to the theatre, and picked up that comic mask and put it on the fire. The face was turned upwards, laughing still.

The higher the blaze grew the more it laughed. It revelled in the flames, it crackled with glee; but the end came at last, the laugh was extinguished. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

A handful of charred cinders in the grate, a large flake of tinder caught updraught, and whirled heavenward through the chimney, was the last the guv'nor saw of THAT COMIC MASK.

PRIVATE JOHN AND GEN. MEADE.

AN INCIDENT IN THE DEFENSE OF CEMETERY HILL AT GETTYSBURG.

Inter-Ocean.

At Gettysburg, during the last desperate attempt of the enemy to carry Cemetery Hill, the ammunition of an Ohio battery that was taking most prominent part in the engagement gave out. The moment was a critical one. Gen. Meade, who was below with his staff, dismissed all his attending officers, and rode with but a single orderly to where the battery was posted. He was in plain fatigue dress, and wore no easily recognizable insignia of rank. He was much concerned about the state of affairs, and said earnestly to the subordinate officers in command, that the hill must be held—that there must be no retiring—that everything depended on holding this position. The boys had been quick to see this, and had commenced the work of gathering rebel shells, which had struck near them without exploding. Many of these had been returned to the rebel lines with great effect, and in this last extremity the men were resorting to their use. This struck the dignified major general as an excellent move, and he proceeded to give his assistance. He picked up shells and carried them to the guns, but did not exhibit the readiness of the begrimed artillery men, dashing about with insane energy. The shells were apt to be heavier than he expected, and he was a little backward in raising them. Private John Snicker was one of the best men in the battery. He was much aroused now, however, and his sight was dimmed by perspiration, powder and dust. He disliked a slow man. General Meade attracted his attention. John thought his will was good, but he didn't know how to gather shells. As the general stooped to pick up a regular whizzer, John made a dash for the same shell, giving the stooper a sort of contemptuous shove, and saying snappishly: "Get out. Geout the way here, old ginger fingers. You're in the way here, you are." And then as the general stood aside to allow him to lift the shell, John, without looking up, said apologetically, "Your mind's willin' but your body's weak."

The general smiled, made a deprecating motion with his hand, and took his stand as an observer. In a few minutes Major General Warren and staff came up, Warren saluting Meade and reporting to him as his superior. John was astounded—dazed. He had hustled the general in command, and as that general rode away, after the crisis had passed, with a good word for the men for doing so well, John remarked: "That's a good one on me, boys. I came as near kickin' Major General Meade as a man could and not do it. It scares me to think of it. I thought he was some captain or lieutenant foolin' round where he had no business, and I gave him a pretty hard shove. Je-rusa-lem. And John to ease his mind, turned a hand spring. He has always contended that a major-general who could gather shells for use in battle exhibited a mighty strong interest in the fight, and that this "stoopin' to conquer" was the clear thing.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY AND SECRETARY OF WAR.

Fortress Monroe Letter.

I like to think of the bay as the place where a certain secretary of the navy—I think it was Preston, 1849—for the first time in his life went on board of a ship. It was a man-of-war, and the secretary was making an official visit. He climbed on board and walked across the deck to the companion-way. He looked down; he was surprised at what he saw, and, rushing back to his friends who followed him on board, exclaimed: "By Jove! she's hollow." But they've got the mate to that at Old Point. It's about a secretary of war—the tradition is a little uncertain as to which one—who made an official visit to Fort Monroe. He was escorted into the fort with great ceremony, and then paralyzed the commandant by walking up to the sergent of the guard at the sally port and shaking hands cordially with him.

THE COWBOY'S OCCUPATION GOING.

Boston Globe.

A tourist through the grazing regions of Texas predicts that a war between the stockmen and cowboys is pending, and that when it does come it will be waged by both sides to the bitter end. The stockmen, since the recent leasing of public and private lands, have begun to fence in the same, and as the stock will hereafter be confined to definite bounds, the calling of the cowboy will be gone.

AN EXCHANGE OF REMEDIES.

A RECIPE FOR CURING A WART ON THE NOSE TRADED FOR A FORMULA FOR CATCHING A MAN'S ATTENTION.

Brooklyn Eagle.

"How is it, my dear, that all the men glance up at your window when they pass, while not a soul looks up at me from one end of the day to the other?" asked one ancient maid of another, as they met on Clinton street and exchange kisses, yesterday afternoon.

"He, he, do they?" giggled the other. "I didn't know it. I can't imagine why they do, I'm sure,"

"I don't think you're any more attractive than I am," sniffed the first, "and yet I never catch a man's eye when you are on guard."

"It's the fault of the men," simpered the fortunate one. "I don't know why they do it, any more than you do."

"If you will tell me, dear, how you manage it, I will give you a recipe for that wart on your nose. It cured mine."

"Really, sighed the other, rubbing her wart reflectively, "I would like to get rid of that wart. If the recipe is any good, I will be glad to help you catch a look from a man once in a while. Tell me what it is, and I'll try it."

"Not much! You give me your recipe for a man, and then, if it works, I'll give you the formula for the wart."

"Oh, mine is sure to work; you've noticed this yourself, for you just said so. What will cure the wart, dear? and then I will tell you why every man who passes our house once, looks up at it when he passes it again."

"Just make an incision in the wart and drop in lemon juice. Now tell me how to catch the men. I'm dying to know."

"Just rub a little soap on the sidewalk, and stand at the window where they can see you as they come down. As they drop, give a little squeal, wring your hands, and look sympathetically after them as they go away. Not one of 'em but what will go a block out of the way to look up at the woman who pitied, instead of laughed at him, the day he sprawled before her window. You try it, and I'll bet you find it as good as your wart remedy. By the way, how much lemon juice did you say?"

And having exchanged full particulars, they separated, each hurrying home to try the other's recipe.

THE ST. LOUIS INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

Cor. Cleveland Herald.

The St. Louis Manual Training school has been in operation nearly three years. The first class is now about through with the course. The class is composed of twenty-eight boys. These boys, of an average age of 17, are about to complete three steam engines, upon which they will have done all the work, from the drawings to the finishing touch. With this manual training they have obtained the average high school education.

The parent who sees the St. Louis manual training school in operation sees solved before his eyes the problem how his boy may be sure to make a good living in the world. The boy may not become rich. Wealth is possible only for the few. But a graduate of a manual training school need never fall below an existence of a good, comfortable support, and his chances for acquiring wealth will be far greater than they would be without this training.

The boys are over 14. They devote two hours each day, ten hours each week, to manual labor, besides following a high school course of studies. They make quite as rapid progress intellectually as if they devoted all their time to study. The manual labor serves as a recreation, and the boys love it. The boys become skilled draughtsmen. They gain a thorough knowledge of materials. They learn to mold, to cast, and to plane, bore and drill castings by machine tools. Wrought iron and steel are worked by them at the forge, and tempering, brazing and soldering are thoroughly learned. The health of the boys is not impaired, but improved.

JUSTICE SLEEPS AND SNORES.

A lawsuit involving the present ownership and future prospects of a calf was tried on recently before Justice Case, of Oswego. For the defense appeared Recorder Buller, who, after dinner, the testimony being all in, began to sum up for his client. It was remarked that he was in excellent form. The judge leaned his head upon his hand, assumed an expression of great gravity and penetration, and Mr. Buller began. Encouraged by the thoughtful and attentive attitude of the court, he kindled with his theme, and in a strain of lofty and animated eloquence discoursed for three-quarters of an hour, concluding with a fiery peroration, and sitting down at last with happy anticipations of victory. Then the judge awoke with a snort, gazed mildly around the court-room, and blandly remarked that if the learned counsel was ready to sum up he had better begin at once. On motion of the opposing counsel the case was adjourned until the next day to enable Mr. Buller to recover from the shock.

PECULIARILY EXASPERATING.

Boston Transcript.

There is probably nothing better calculated to stir up a man's evil passions and make a red-handed murderer of him than, after having been yanked by the jaw all about the dentist's inquisition chamber, to have that cold-blooded villian speak of your tooth as having been "removed."